

# THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY

Entered as second-class matter November 18, 1907, at the Post Office, New York, N. Y., under the Act of Congress of March 3, 1879

VOL. IV

NEW YORK, APRIL 29, 1911

No. 25

Some time ago one of the readers of THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY wrote to the Editor a letter in which the following question was propounded: "My question is regarding the teaching of the use of long marks from the very beginning. I have been insisting on my pupils marking the quantities in all their written work and am now wondering whether the end aimed at is worth all the wear and tear to both pupil and teacher. I should like your opinion on the subject, if not too much trouble, and also I should like to see in THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY, at an early date if possible, some arguments pro and con. My object in teaching the marks is to secure correctness in pronunciation and to make the Vergil work easier".

This question has been presented to me several times. Its answer involves various considerations of aim and practice. I should be glad to have any suggestions that the readers of THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY may see fit to offer. Meanwhile the matter appears to me in this light.

We do or we do not expect our pupils to be able to read Latin aloud correctly. If we do not expect them to read it aloud, there is no reason why they should learn the length of vowels at all. If their use of the language is to be confined to the ability to translate without reading aloud, this ability can be gained without knowing how to pronounce a single word correctly. I suppose nobody will maintain seriously that this is the aim of Latin teaching. If, on the other hand, we expect our pupils to be able to read Latin aloud with correctness, they must be taught correct pronunciation. The ability to scan Vergil with ease is merely the result of proper pronouncing of prose. My experience is that marking the quantities by itself conduces neither to the proper pronunciation of prose nor to readiness in scanning Vergil. In my courses here at Teachers College, I have had numerous students, either Seniors in college or graduate students, who, in writing their Latin exercises for me, consistently marked the vowel lengths, at least of penults and ultimates. I have yet to find a single student whose pronunciation was at all affected by this ability to mark quantities. I am therefore very doubtful as to the value of this kind of training by itself, and unfortunately in very many cases the 'by itself' seems to be the chief aim of the work. In the early stages of the study correct pronunciation must be insisted upon or in nine out of ten cases it will never be gained.

Now as an adjunct to correct pronunciation certain rules of quantity are valuable and the quantity of the vowels in final syllables is extremely important. But unless the learning of these quantities is combined with persistent practice in pronunciation under searching criticism but little will be gained. I have known teachers who insisted that their pupils should mark the quantities of the vowels, but were themselves careless in their own pronunciation. In very many cases the marking of quantities is not combined with any use of the logical power, and not merely is this the case but most teachers are so convinced that their duty ends with the penult and the ultima, that they habitually mispronounce the other syllables even where the quantity of the vowels is easily recognized. Let me give a couple of examples. The title of Cicero's treatise on Friendship is habitually mispronounced; the second syllable of the word *amicitia* is habitually shortened even by teachers. Now logical teaching would naturally require the pupil to know the pronunciation of *amicus*, and as *amicitia* is a derivative for which the pupil should never consult the dictionary the correct pronunciation of the second syllable should be as much to be expected as the correct pronunciation of the penult of *amicus*. Again, take a word like *vito*. The pupil learns the quantity of the penult as long. He also knows the quantity of *e* in composition; consequently the pupil should pronounce *evito* right. He has also been taught the value of the suffix *-bilis* and the significance of the stem vowel in the first conjugation; he ought therefore to pronounce every syllable of *evitabilis* correctly and in the same fashion the further compound *inevitabilis* should be pronounced correctly. Yet most teachers will themselves pronounce this word, if found in prose, incorrectly, contenting themselves with the proper enunciation of the antepenult only, and they will say that they do not see how this is to be avoided in rapid reading. But they pronounce long syllables in English long, even in rapid reading.

The truth of the matter is, that we attempt to get at the difficulty in the wrong fashion. It is characteristic of our national manner of thinking to regard a device as better than a principle. The marking of the long vowels should be the result, not the cause of proper pronunciation, and the sooner we teachers realize that the thing to aim at is not the proper scansion of poetry but the proper reading of prose, the sooner shall we find it easy to scan

poetry correctly. Every teacher should lay it upon his conscience to give as much regard to the rhythm and quantitative length of the syllables in prose sentences as in verse. He should try in reading Cicero to feel the rhythm in the language and when he can do that he will find scansion easy. I regard the marking of quantities as a good test of knowledge but the ability to mark quantities correctly I consider of no value in itself. I suggest as an exercise that teachers should require their pupils every day to take down at dictation even a short piece of Latin, marking the quantities as they write it. The teacher will then find in the first place whether he pronounces correctly himself, and in the second place whether his pupils have been taught to distinguish between short and long vowels. G. L.

#### A CHAPTER FROM AN UNPUBLISHED LATIN SYNTAX, WITH PREFATORY DISCUSSION

##### I. THE ANTEQUAM (PRIUSQUAM) CONSTRUCTIONS.

Not a few teachers of Latin have stated that they find themselves embarrassed in teaching Latin Prose Composition when they come to the expositions of the *antequam* (*priusquam*) constructions given in the Latin grammars.

In some they claim to find an elusive vagueness, in others inadequacy of statement, and in others actual error; in none do they find as satisfactory an account as is accorded to other conjunctions of similar importance.

That these constructions have suffered thus is perhaps in some measure due to their inherent difficulty and intractability to an effort to force them into parallelism with other conjunctions. It is also due, doubtless, to the fact that the man who compiles a Latin Grammar is under the necessity of limiting himself as to the space to be devoted to any one construction or group of constructions, and must try to condense into one statement what might with increase of clearness be divided among several. Just where to draw the line between the conflicting demands upon him in this particular is a very difficult task, perhaps the most difficult the writer of a grammar must encounter.

At the same time it seems a proper contention that this condensation should never be carried to the point where the facts of the language usage cannot be ascertained by the reader from the statements given; yet precisely this charge of over-condensation is made, with some degree of justice, in regard to the *antequam* (*priusquam*) constructions.

It is the judgment of the writer that the editors of the grammars have essayed the impossible in trying to do justice to these constructions even in the briefest way in as few words as suffice for some other conjunctions. For, more than any other subordinating conjunction, *antequam* shows an uneven and dissimilar development of the Subjunctive usage in

the three spheres of time—present, past, and future. Generally speaking, a statement applicable to sentences in one sphere of time may be entirely inapplicable in either of the other two. Moreover, the presence of a negative in the leading sentence has a significance almost on a par with its effect in the *πλε* sentence of Greek. Consequently affirmative and negative sentences must be separately considered. With no other conjunction of Latin do we find exactly analogous conditions, and the impossibility of adequate statement in as brief space as may be devoted to most of them becomes increasingly evident as we continue our investigation.

In the second part of this paper a chapter from a Latin Syntax and Prose Composition, not yet completed, will be given, in which the *attempt* is made to state the laws governing the use of *antequam* (*priusquam*) in terms sufficiently explicit to enable the student to make sure and ready use of them.

It is not claimed that this statement will be found entirely suitable for the Latin Grammar but the hope is felt that it may prove of assistance to teachers of Latin Prose and may result in some modification of the treatment of the subject in subsequent editions of our school grammars in the interest of easier comprehension on the part of the student.

To the teacher of Latin Prose the test of satisfactory exposition of a principle in a Latin Grammar is that his student who finds an English sentence referable to this principle may, by exercising a proper degree of critical judgment, find that which will enable him to give the Latin equivalent with certainty of being right.

The application of this test to our grammars, while in a certain sense unfair, inasmuch as they are not compiled solely as Latin Prose manuals, will strikingly illustrate the claim here set up, that the *antequam* constructions are too briefly treated, and will develop some of the considerations demanding the form of statement given in the second part of this article.

Let us therefore examine the statements made in one of our best grammars and consider the objections which are often made by students and teachers.

One grammar gives the following:

I. In the Temporal clauses with *antequam* and *priusquam* the Present and Perfect are put in the Indicative when the action is viewed as an Actual Fact, and in the Subjunctive when the action is viewed as something Desired, Proposed or Conceived:

*Antequam ad sententiam redeo, de me pauca dicam, before I resume asking your opinions, I shall say a few words in regard to myself; C.C. 4, 10, 20.*

*Nec prius respexi quam venimus, nor did I look back until we arrived.*

*Priusquam incipias, consulto opus est, before you begin, there is need of deliberation; S.C.1, 6. Non prius duces dimittunt, quam sit concessum,*

etc., they did not let the leaders go, until it was granted, etc.; Caes. 3, 18, 7.

## II. The Imperfect and Pluperfect are put in the Subjunctive:

Pervenit, priusquam Pompeius sentire posset, he arrived before Pompey could become aware of his approach; Caes. C.3, 67, 4.

Paucis ante diebus quam Syracusae caperentur, a few days before Syracuse was taken; L.25, 31, 12.

Antequam de meo adventu audire potuissent, in Macedoniam porrexi, before they were able (had been able) to hear of my approach, I went straight into Macedonia; C.Planc.41, 98.

1. When the Principal clause is negative, and contains an historical tense, the Temporal clause generally takes the Perfect Indicative, as in the second example under the rule, rarely the Imperfect, Indicative or Subjunctive . . .

For the Latin scholar who is already familiar with the use of these conjunctions, says the objector, the above may suffice, but to the average student or to the average teacher it presents many difficulties.

Suppose, for example, that the student has these simple sentences to translate into Latin:

(a) Before I shall answer this question, I intend to discuss another matter.

(b) This I shall not do before (until) I see my master.

(c) The general arrived two days before the city was captured.

Let us attempt to follow the processes of reasoning which the student will employ in deciding how to express in Latin the dependent verbs in these sentences.

For sentence (a) he will begin by reading Rule I. He will pass over the Perfect Indicative as an obvious impossibility and may reject the Present Indicative because he does not believe that a dependent future action can be "viewed as an Actual Fact". He finds the solution, as he thinks, in the latter part of this Rule, which says that the Subjunctive is used to express an action as something "Proposed or Conceived". He, therefore, concludes to use the Present Subjunctive, but has some doubt as to its correctness because the rule reads "the Present and Perfect . . . are put in the Subjunctive", and does not mention that they occur in future sentences. When he passes on now to examine the examples given under this rule, still graver doubts assail him as to the correctness of his conclusion upon finding that the very first example is similar to the sentence which he is trying to translate, but that the Present Indicative instead of the Present Subjunctive is used in the dependent clause. How is he to reconcile the contradiction? There seems to him to be no doubt that the dependent clause in his sentence and in the first example presents an action "viewed as something . . . Proposed", yet according to the Latin they must be viewed as an "actual Fact". The only difference between the two English sentences is that

his sentence contains the word 'shall', making it more distinctly future than the example given, which has the Present tense in the English translation. This may be the key; he will stick to the Subjunctive since he can certainly defend it under the words of the rule.

He passes on now to sentence (b). This time he reads through every statement and every example given under *antequam*. He goes through much the same process of reasoning as before and concludes that he must express the verb here just as he had expressed it in the preceding sentence. He feels more sure, however, that the Subjunctive is right because the presence of the negative makes the dependent clause seem more uncertain of accomplishment and hence less possible of being "viewed as an Actual Fact".

Next he comes to sentence (c).

Here his difficulty is greater than before by reason of his previous careful examination of all the statements and examples. The first and natural conclusion would be to use the Perfect Indicative, but among the examples under the heading, "The Imperfect and Pluperfect are put in the Subjunctive", is one nearly like his sentence, in which the verb is in the Imperfect Subjunctive. The sentence reads *Paucis ante diebus quam Syracusae caperentur*, and is translated 'a few days before Syracuse was captured'. This certainly is exactly parallel to the sentence which he wishes to translate, yet the statement of Rule I, calling for the Perfect Indicative, seems to cover it also. 'Surely', he argues, 'the dependent action must be viewed as an actual fact when the sentence reads "two days before" or "a few days before"; therefore the Perfect Indicative should be used; but there is no use arguing against the Latin; there it stands in the Imperfect Subjunctive in a sentence exactly similar to mine. I must, therefore, use the Imperfect Subjunctive but evidently I do not understand the rules given'.

In some such way as this will the average student proceed in an attempt to apply this set of rules. However true their statements may be, they are not as well adapted to the use of the student of Latin Prose Composition as they might perhaps be made.

Another objector finds fault with the treatment given in another popular grammar where the following is found:

*Antequam* and *Priusquam* (often written *ante . . . quam*, *prius . . . quam*) take the Indicative to denote an Actual Fact.

1. Sometimes the Present or Future Perfect; as,—*prius respondes quam rogo*, you answer before I ask; *nihil contra disputabo priusquam dixerit*, I will say nothing in opposition, before he speaks.

2. Sometimes the Perfect, especially after negative clauses; as,—



non prius iugulandi finis fuit, quam Sulla omnes suos divitiis explevit, there was no end of murder until Sulla satisfied all his henchmen with wealth.

*Antequam* and *priusquam* take the Subjunctive to denote an act as Anticipated.

1. Thus the Subjunctive may denote—

(a) An act in preparation for which the main act takes place: as,—

*priusquam* dimicarent, foedus ictum est, i. e. in anticipation of the fight, a treaty was struck.

By an extension of this usage, the Subjunctive is sometimes used of *general truths*, where the anticipatory notion has faded out; as,—

tempestas minatur antequam surgat, the tempest threatens before it rises.

(b) An act anticipated and forestalled, as,—

*priusquam* telum adici posset, omnis acies terga vertit, before a spear could be hurled, the whole army fled.

(c) An act anticipated and deprecated, as,—

animum omittunt priusquam loco demigrent, they die rather than quit their post.

2. After historical tenses the Imperfect Subjunctive is used, especially by post-Augustan writers, where the notion of anticipation has entirely vanished; as,—

*Sol antequam se abderet fugientem vidit Antonium*, the sun before it set saw Antony fleeing.

If a student using this grammar wishes to write sentence (a) above, he may draw two different conclusions. He may argue that the dependent clause cannot "denote an Actual Fact", and that it may be considered "an act in preparation for which the main act takes place". He will, therefore, use the Subjunctive. Or he may observe that the only future sentence given among the Latin examples is the second and, without noticing the negative, since no mention is made of its significance, he may decide that the Future Perfect Indicative must be used in his sentence and in all other future sentences.

Many teachers as well as students deplore the use in this grammar of the phrases "anticipated and forestalled" and "anticipated and deprecated". These categories, originated by Professor Hale in his monograph on The Anticipatory Subjunctive in Greek and Latin, written for mature scholars, seem strangely out of place in a school grammar which is elsewhere characterized by a remarkable degree of simplicity and clearness in wording and definition.

To the school boy they present formidable, sometimes insurmountable difficulty; even to the college student they give pause. Even when the teacher is able to make their meaning quite clear while the student is looking at the examples, the difficulty of remembering them makes them undesirable.

<sup>1</sup> There is not the same loop-hole here as in the statement in the other grammar, where the wording is "an action *viewed as an Actual Fact*".

It may, of course, be urged that the editor deemed it of importance to keep the 'anticipatory' idea in the foreground and hence was willing to use words unfamiliar to the average boy rather than simpler language which might necessitate the omission of the word 'anticipatory'. It is a matter of opinion just how much importance should be attached to this consideration.

I should not find myself in sympathy with this contention, because I do not believe that the 'anticipatory' conception was the chief reason for the Subjunctive with *antequam*, nor can I believe that it is well to emphasize in a school grammar an explanation of the Subjunctive which breaks down in so many sentences which the student will encounter.

Not to extend these objections indefinitely, we may conclude with a single allusion to one other grammar. In it the very first statement on this subject is this: "With *antequam* and *priusquam*, 'before', the Perfect Indicative states a *Fact* which preceded the main verb:—*antequam* tuas legi litteras, hominem ire cupiebam, before I read your letter, I wished the man to go".

Perhaps the type-setter misplaced a word; for this should read either 'which the main verb preceded' or 'which followed the main verb'. The statement exactly reverses the actual order of antecedence and subsequence.

Many other points in these and other grammars might be touched upon here but enough has perhaps been said to give concrete examples and illustrations of the difficulties occasioned in the mind of the student by over-condensation and failure to stress the negative.

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(To be concluded).

## REVIEWS

Demosthenes, Philippics. Edited by Gilbert A. Davies. Cambridge University Press (1907). 60 cents.

This little book, intended primarily for school use, is an edition of Philippics I, II, and III, and contains, besides the Greek text, an introduction and explanatory notes. The introduction, which gives a brief account of the history of Macedonia, Philip's activities against Greece and the life of Demosthenes, is good, but is all too short, for it includes no discussion whatever of the style and literary characteristics of the greatest representative of the Canon of the Ten.

The notes seem well adapted to the needs of young students. Following the example of the majority of the editions of these orations, there is considerable translation of words and phrases.

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LA RUE VAN HOOK.

Greek Diminutives in -ιον: a Study in Semantics. By Walter Petersen. Weimar: R. Wagner Sohn (1910). Pp. VII + 299.

Begun as a doctor's dissertation, which was suggested by Brugmann and written under Professor Oertel's guidance, the book before us is chiefly founded upon the work of these two scholars. In fact some knowledge of Professor Oertel's contributions to the theory of semantics is necessary if one would understand the author's point of view. But the abundance of the material has caused the work to outgrow the usual limits of a dissertation, and the results are unusually important and striking.

Probably every teacher of Greek has felt a twinge of conscience (or an impulse to smile) when explaining to his class that *μειράκιον*, 'boy of about fourteen years', is really a diminutive of *μείραξ*, 'girl of about fourteen', or that *πτερόγιον*, 'flap of a coat of mail', properly means 'little wing', or that when the people of Tegea called their marketplace *πλινθιον* they were laboring under the impression that it was smaller than an average brick. More than one prairie-bred boy has been filled with just disdain for a language which implies that small size is an essential characteristic of a plain. Now it is quite true that we have managed to save our own reputations and that of the author we happened to be reading by explaining that the diminutive force has faded out of such words as these.

Petersen shows that in these and hosts of other words -ιον is not a diminutive suffix at all. In fact it is always incorrect scientifically as well as pedagogically to assume an original diminutive force for this suffix where there is no evidence for such force in the literature or other monuments of antiquity. For the diminutive force of the suffix -ιον is of comparatively late origin: its earliest quotable occurrence is *ποδίον*, 'a little foot', in Epicharmus; and so the chances are always against the supposition that a word in -ιον occurring in a classical author has lost a diminutive force which it once possessed. Our decision must in every case be based upon the actual use of the word in question.

On this point we cannot get any help, as certain scholars have tried to do, from the accentual peculiarities of diminutives in -ιον; for, on the one hand, the same peculiarities are common in other substantives, and, on the other, there are many exceptions even among the diminutives. Petersen summarizes the matter as follows: "Trisyllabic substantives in -ιον, if all connection with the adjectival types from which they are derived has faded from the mind, have a tendency to accent the penult if they are dactylic, but the antepenult if they are tribrachs".

In all doubtful cases we should prefer to interpret the suffix in one of its other meanings: 'that which is connected with, comes from, is made of,

belongs to, belongs to the category of, is like but not equivalent to' the primitive. "But", some one says, "if our students must remember all these meanings for the suffix their last state is worse than their first". The case is not so bad as that: for all ordinary purposes we may group them under the two meanings 'that which comes from' and 'that which is like'.

The diminutive force arose by a specialization of the meaning 'that which is like the primitive but not equivalent to it'. Probably the most influential of the pattern words was *παιδίον*. This was originally used of a baby by someone who felt that *παῖς* properly designated a larger child, and who therefore formed *παιδίον* to mean 'that which is like *παῖς* and yet different from it'. Since the difference was a matter of size, the new word really meant 'a small *παῖς*' and the suffix meant 'small'. In that sense it was then used to form words designating small objects even in cases where every one must feel that the primitive might be applied to them. Thus 'a little daughter' was called *θυγάτριον* even though *θυγάτηρ* was as applicable to babes as to grown women.

The word *παιδίον* was influential also in developing the familiar hypocoristic use of diminutive -ιον, because "endearment is oftenest and most evidently associated with small size in case of children". The process, however, must have been helped along by many other words, such as *θυγάτριον*, *κάριον*, *τεχνίον*.

Petersen thinks that the deteriorative use of the suffix represents an independent development from the meaning 'that which is like but not equal to the primitive'. *ἀνὴρ* is always an honorable term, and so a cowardly, dishonest, or wicked man was called *ἀνδρίον*, 'something like a man but not a real man'. Similarly *τεχνίον* means properly 'something like an art but not a real art'. In such words, however, the suffix was inevitably interpreted as meaning 'a poor sort of', and in this sense it was used to form new derivatives.

The book closes with an exhaustive discussion of conglutinates with -ιον as final member, such as *-ιδιον*, *-υδιον*, *-ακιον*, *-ισκιον*, some of which have almost as wide a range of meaning as the simple suffix.

The word index covers nineteen pages and, with the excellent table of contents, makes everything in the book easily accessible.

It is a pity that so excellent a piece of work could not have been published in better form. Many of the misprints are doubtless to be charged against the German typesetter, but there are numerous stylistic infelicities for which he cannot be blamed. The word *already* is sadly overworked. *Also...not* and *even...not* do duty for *not...either*. Such phrases as the following are all too common: "a few more important points of view for the arrangement" (p. 7), "the generally ac-

cepted rule, both by ancient grammarians and modern authorities" (p. 10). But these superficial blemishes are of no great consequence in a work of this character, and the adequate excuse for them is too obvious to require mention.

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EDGAR HOWARD STURTEVANT.

#### PROFESSOR SMYTH ON VERGIL

No lover of Vergil is for a moment unwilling to admit his vast indebtedness to Homer and other Greek poets but even those who are most liberal in their allowances cannot fail to be astonished at the statements made by Professor Herbert Weir Smyth before The New York Latin Club as reported in *THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY* of March 18 (4155-158). It is bad enough to take Pope for an authority, who did not know Greek and translated Homer because Dryden had done the *Aeneid* and wrote his encomium on Homer partly as an advertisement for his translation and partly out of jealousy of Dryden's success with Vergil, but to make, straight from the shoulder, the claim that Vergil's "point of departure is not his own perception" and that "his comparisons, so far as they refer to natural phenomena, are all borrowed from the Greek", is not merely gross exaggeration but profoundly vicious and mischievous in its probable influence.

If every pre-Vergilian verse had perished, including Homer, how many comparisons employed by Vergil would ring false? It is a great pity that Homer's borrowings will never be known. Could they be known, we might find some stock figures recurring as incessantly in the pre-Homeric epic as the lion and the lamb in the Old Testament, and that the figurative range of Homer was identical with that of the bards in general. So far as nature is concerned, the figurative range of poets is as narrowly restricted by the geography of the country they inhabit as is the food of the people.

Now the climates of Italy and Greece or maritime Asia Minor, the fauna and flora, seasons, winds, and rainfall are practically the same. The natural imagery of Homer was capable of making a direct appeal to all Italians and it was not always Homer that suggested to Vergil the incidents in nature, but, having learned Homer by heart as a boy, he was inevitably reminded by certain natural phenomena of Homer. Nor is this a demerit of Vergil, although it appears to be so when stated in the sly words of that slyest of English men of letters.

But let us take Professor Smyth's example. It is an unhappy choice for him, since a better for his purpose might have been found. The *Aeneadae* are compared to wolves, in *Aen.* 2.355, Ulysses and Diomedes to lions, in *Il.* 10.297. Now I should like to leave it to any candid reader to look up both contexts and decide whether it seems probable that we have imitation here. There are two Greeks, many *Aeneadae*. The point of the Latin compari-

son is the recklessness arising out of extremity: the Greek passage, without detail, depicts a deed of courage and daring only. Again, if Homer is in Vergil's line of vision, why are the animals not lions in the dark? They are in fact wolves in the mist such as Vergil knew in the Alps or the Apennines.

I feel sure that only one who had formed a certain habit of mind would call this a case of imitation, and, furthermore, I am prepared to say that such a one has used Conington's edition as his *vade mecum*. Conington's edition is invaluable for one who desires to master the *Aeneid* but it is disastrous to use him alone, for he sees his author through Pope's monocle, and every passage he refers to must be suspected and examined in its original setting. Even when he quotes the alleged model you are not safe to rest on his judgment. Only last week I fell by mere chance upon his note to *Aen.* 6.707, where the innumerable peoples of the happy valley are flitting about like bees in a meadow and the whole plain is filled with a murmuring sound. Now Homer had a simile from bees, and so, although Vergil's father was a bee-keeper and Vergil an authority on bees, the simile must come perforce, according to Conington, from Homer. This time, however, the felony is compounded, for Vergil stole from Apollonius and he from Homer! But take the lines of Greek quoted in Conington's edition, which he says Vergil has *translated*, and you can only regard Conington's suggestion as a rash and blind misstatement. The language, save for one word, is all different, the application of the comparison quite diverse, and all trace of imitation lacking.

With respect to the assertion that Vergil is in debt to Homer for all comparisons so far as they relate to nature, take an interesting example from *Aen.* 5.273. The boat, awkwardly endeavoring to make progress with broken oars, is finely compared to a struggling serpent, wounded on the highway by a passing wheel. Conington searched his Homer and his Apollonius in vain for the original of this comparison, then, after insinuating a possible, or rather, impossible source in Lucretius, grudgingly wrote: The comparison *seems* to be Vergil's own. Acquitted for lack of evidence, in other words!

In conclusion I say: By all means read all the Greek you can for the sake of your Vergil, but don't let Conington, or Pope's jealous preface, or Sainte-Beuve's seductive essay come between you and your author. It is important that you should look at him first with your own eyes, often and intently: Vergil is, of all authors, most easily spoiled by annotation. Remember that though the parts are not all made in his own factory, yet they are well tooled and well assembled. Don't fail to remember either that he lived in the same natural world as Homer, that Greek literature scarcely needed to be acclimated in Italy, and that he essayed to tell a story placed squarely in the Homeric world and in



heroic times. Above all, don't use Homer to help you belittle Vergil. Both are supremely great in their respective ways.

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NORMAN C. DEWITT.

### CORRESPONDENCE

Will you spare me space in THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY for a few words of appreciation of Mr. Stephen A. Hurlbut's admirable exhortation in the issue of April 1 to teachers of Latin to busy themselves with the Italian tongue? I heartily approve of Mr. Hurlbut's article, and am sure that it will be of the greatest value to those Latin teachers, if any there be now, who share the prejudice which, under the idea that it was a vulgar and degenerate derivative of Latin, I had against Italian before I knew the language.

I may say in passing that Mr. Hurlbut's remarks about the feminine plural *ova*, eggs, with the masculine singular *ovo*, from the Latin neuter *ovum*, recall to my mind another instance of feminine tenacity in Italian. Almost, if not quite, the only ordinary Italian noun ending in -o which is not of the masculine gender is *mano*, hand, which has steadfastly maintained the feminine gender of its Latin prototype, itself a marked exception to the rules for grammatical gender in the parent language.

There is only one point in regard to which I should be sorry to see Mr. Hurlbut's suggestions prevail, and that is the matter of pronunciation. Like himself, I never heard Latin so beautifully pronounced as by an Italian gentleman who happened to be my fellow-passenger in a railway carriage in Italy, and I recognize fully the beneficent influence of practising the pronunciation of Italian upon our pronunciation of Latin, but I should regard it as a misfortune to adopt the changes in the pronunciation of certain letters in Italian that have developed from the sounds which we know were given them by the Romans of classical times. Apart from the feeling of what the Germans call *Pietät* towards the ancient Romans themselves, the greater simplicity of having a single sound each for *c* and *g* in all cases is worth something, and it would be a pity to reintroduce, on the other hand, the unique case of one vowel sound represented by different characters that would be involved in giving up the Republican pronunciation of *ae*. While, too, we may properly despair, with Professor Bennett, of attaining the exact pronunciation of the ancients, we can approach it nearly enough for practical purposes, and surely very few scholars would seriously consider a return to "the abominations of the English method".

ST. GEORGE, Staten Island, New York.

HENRY PREBLE.

### NOTE ON OBAERATUS

So far as I can follow up the notes in our school editions, it appears that they all correctly explain *obaeratus* as meaning 'one who in payment of his

debts has given himself into servitude'. One edition even refers the student to B.G.6.13, where Caesar mentions this as Gallic custom. In spite of this, the vocabularies all translate the word by 'debtor'. In view of the facts (for which compare Varro De Lingua Latina 7.105, quoted by W. W. Fowler, Social Life at Rome in the Age of Cicero, 219, note 2, where *obaerati* are described as those qui suas operas in operam dant pro pecunia quam debebant), should we not rather define the word by 'serf'?

ERNST RIESS.

From the February number of The Periodical, a magazine published by the Oxford University Press, to give notice of new and forthcoming books, we quote a paragraph which occurs under the caption *Obiter Scripta*, because it chimes in with an utterance to be found in THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY 4.185:

"Annotated School-books are the very devil", says a writer in the July Cornhill, "but the remedy is easy—use plain texts". "Whether others have found this saying borne out by their experience", Professor D. A. Slater says in his *Stories from Ovid's Metamorphoses*, "I do not know. But a good many teachers will probably hesitate before expecting beginners to read with profit any work in a foreign language in the way in which Macaulay read the classics in India. He used plain texts, and the method which he describes is no doubt the ideal method—at a later stage. But it has its perils, and there is food for reflection in 'A.G.'s ironical advice:—

If you should consult the classics (and at times I think you must,

Just to show they're persons whom it's quite impossible to trust),

Do not seek the verbal meaning and the literal sense to render.

Read them (like the late Macaulay) with your feet upon the fender".

In a small book of only 48 pages (if the number of The Periodical quoted above is to be trusted), published at the high price of \$2.50 net, entitled *Hannibal's March through the Alps*, Professor Spenser Wilkinson argues that the pass followed by Hannibal was the Col du Clapier, and that the "acceptance of this route leads to a simple and possible explanation of the apparent discrepancies between the text of Polybius and that of Livy". The study is illustrated by two figures and four maps.

In the preface to his translation of Aristotle's *De Generatione Animalium*, Professor Arthur Platt writes:

"Should any man of science come fresh to the reading of his treatise, he will, I think, be amazed and delighted to see what grasp and insight Aristotle displays in handling questions which still absorb us after all that time. If we smile at some parts, and those very considerable parts, . . . let us remember that most of these oddities were accepted by no less a man than William Harvey, and that Darwin wrote with generous enthusiasm concerning another of the zoological works: 'Linnaeus and Cuvier have been my two gods, though in very different ways, but they were mere schoolboys to old Aristotle'".

**THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY** is published by The Classical Association of the Atlantic States, weekly, on Saturdays, from October to May inclusive, except in weeks in which there is a legal or school holiday, at Teachers College, 525 West 120th Street, New York City.

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